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Increased Understanding of Natural Gas Development and Regulation



A taxi fills up with natural gas at a service station.

The Philippines Department of Energy (DOE) has begun an education program to introduce bus operators to natural gas operated vehicles, and has begun to introduce gas-powered three-wheeled vehicles.

Since 2001, USAID and the Academy for Educational Development have provided support to the Government of the Philippines (GoP) to further the development and implementation of policies in energy sector reform, renewable energy, natural gas, and reduction of vehicle emissions. In September 2003, USAID sponsored a study tour to Thailand for senior personnel in the Philippine Congress and the Department of Energy (DOE). The purpose of the tour was to increase understanding of natural gas exploration, regulation, and infrastructure development by learning about the recent Thai successes in this area.

During the tour, the Philippines delegation met with senior Thai energy officials in the government and private sector. In addition, they toured natural gas plants to see first-hand how the Thais have managed their own natural gas efforts.

The Philippines is committed to developing its offshore natural gas resources and expanding its natural gas infrastructure to produce both economic and environmental benefits. To accomplish this, the Philippines must first attract the billions of dollars of foreign investment necessary for offshore oil and gas exploration and infrastructure development.

Thailand has been successful in pursuing a path of natural gas development similar to that which the Philippines plans to undertake. Natural gas has already become an integral part of the Thai infrastructure. For example, in Bangkok the city's vast fleet of taxis now runs on clean-burning natural gas.

This tour helped to further the Philippines' goal of increasing its construction of natural gas power generation facilities and conversion of older thermal plants throughout the country to both provide needed electric power for a rapidly expanding population and decrease pollution.

The lessons learned from the trip to Thailand are being put to immediate use as the Philippines moves forward with its plans to increase the use of natural gas vehicles throughout the metro Manila area.

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